A12

natural language processor 640. Similarly, a question examiner may annotate a question with actual informational goals to facilitate training and/or evaluating the operation of the supervised learning system 660 and/or the statistical analyzer 662.

(13) Please replace the first full paragraph at page 26, lines 18-26, with the following:

A13

At 1040, the one or more conditional probabilities can be examined to determine which, if any, informational goals can be inferred from the query. At 1050, based at least in part on the informational goals, if any, inferred at 1040, the run time method can produce an output. The output may include, but is not limited to, an answer responsive to the new query, a rephrased query, a query that can be employed in query by example processing or an error code. At 1060 a determination is made concerning whether any more queries are to be presented to the method. If the determination at 1060 is YES, then processing can continue at 1010. If the determination at 1060 is NO, then processing can conclude.

In the Abstract:

Please replace the abstract with the following:

A14

A system and method for inferring informational goals and preferred level of details in answers in response to questions posed to computer-based information retrieval or question-answering systems is provided. The system includes a query subsystem that can receive an input query and extrinsic data associated with the query and which can output a response to the query. The query subsystem accesses an inference model to retrieve conditional probabilities that certain informational goals are present. One application of the system includes determining a user's likely informational goals and then accessing a knowledge data store to retrieve responsive information. The system includes a natural language processor that parses queries into observable linguistic features and embedded semantic components that can be employed to retrieve the conditional probabilities from the inference model. The inference model is built by employing supervised learning and statistical analysis on a set of queries suitable to be presented